

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 047779

R 281742Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3405

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 21970

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 AND XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, PARM UR, FR

SUBJECT: FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS: A SOVIET COMMENT

REF: (A) PARIS 21594, (B) PARIS 20115

1. FOR SS: BECAUSE OF DIRECT VULNERABILITY OF SOURCE
REQUEST SPECIALLY CAREFUL HANDLING THIS MESSAGE.

2. SOVIET EMBASSY SOURCE SUBSTANTIALLY CONFIRMS AND
SUPPLEMENTS IMPRESSIONS REFTELS AND RELATED MESSAGES.

3. IN ESSENCE, SOURCE SAYS THAT FRANCO-SOVIET NUCLEAR
ACCIDENTS ACCORD, WHICH GISCARD "AGREED TO SIGN AS A
GESTURE TOWARD SOVIET INTEREST IN MORE PROFOUND FRANCO-
SOVIET DISARMAMENT RELATIONSHIP," IS "MINOR" AGREEMENT
WHICH DOES NOT MEASURE UP TO WHAT MOSCOW HOPED TO OBTAIN
FROM FRENCH. KREMLIN WANTS INVOLVE FRENCH MORE
DEEPLY IN BILATERAL NUCLEAR DIALOGUE AND WANTS MORE FRENCH
SUPPORT FOR SOVIET MULTILATERAL DISARMAMENT IDEAS.
SOVIETS CONSIDER FRENCH HAVE RECENTLY BEEN "VERY STUB-
BORN" ON THESE ISSUES. MOSCOW, SOURCE SAYS, WILL
UNDOUBTEDLY KEEP ON TRYING. PERSONALLY, SOURCE BELIEVES
HOWEVER THAT FRENCH WILL NOT CONSENT TO ANY SIGNIFICANT
FURTHER AGREEMENTS IN THIS FIELD. (SEE ALSO REF A)

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4. FOR THIS REASON SOURCE THINKS IT IS NOW UNLIKELY BREZHNEV WILL COME TO FRANCE THIS YEAR. PERSONAL HEALTH AND FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS BEAR ON THIS QUESTION TO AN EXTENT. HOWEVER SOURCE INSISTED THAT, ACCORDING TO AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM MOSCOW, BREZHNEV'S PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATION IS THAT A PARIS TRIP "WILL NOT BE WORTHWHILE" UNLESS THERE IS "SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT TO SIGN." SOURCE SAID ONLY A FURTHER FRENCH COMMITMENT IN DISARMAMENT FIELD IS LIKELY TO SATISFY BREZHNEV ON THIS POINT, OR TO ATTENUATE THE "EXAGGERATED" FEARS CERTAIN SOVIET LEADERS HAVE DEVELOPED AS REGARDS FRENCH DEFENSE POLICY AND GISCARD'S "ATLANTICISM."

5. UNFORTUNATELY, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IS SAID TO HAVE RETURNED WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT SAUVAGNARGUES' TRIP DID NOT SUCCEED IN DISPELLING THESE CONCERNS. CHERVONENKO MAY HAVE MADE "CERTAIN EFFORT" TO MODERATE THESE ANXIETIES HIMSELF. HOWEVER, IRRITATION OVER GISCARD'S ABANDONMENT OF FRANCE'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR AND TURNING BACK TO NATO APPARENTLY PERSISTS. SOURCE EMPHASIZED THIS DID NOT MEAN SOVIETS WERE ANY HAPPIER WITH MITTERRAND AND MARCHAIS, WHO, IN SOVIET VIEW, MAY WELL CONTRIBUTE TO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DESTABILIZATION OF EUROPE, WHICH IS ALSO NOT IN SOVIET INTEREST. (BREZHNEV'S RELATIONS WITH MARCHAIS ARE SO BAD THAT ACCORDING TO STORIES SOURCE HEARD THE TWO

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ACTION SS-25

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R 281742Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3406

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 21970

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DID NOT SPEAK AT ALL AT ECPC.) IT DID MEAN, SOURCE CONCLUDED, THAT SOVIETS FELT CONFRONTED WITH UNCERTAINTIES IN FRANCE.

6. AS FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE, SOURCE SAID THAT CONSIDERATION IS AGAIN BEING GIVEN IN MOSCOW TO POSSIBILITY THAT, INSTEAD OF BREZHNEV VISIT TO FRANCE, GISCARD MIGHT BE INVITED BACK TO MOSCOW FOR WORKING RATHER THAN OFFICIAL VISIT -- WHICH WOULD CORRESPOND TO BREZHNEV'S LAST VISIT TO RAMBOUILLET. SOURCE WAS NOT CERTAIN WHETHER THIS IDEA (WHICH HAS BEEN IN AIR FOR SOME TIME) HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH SAUVAGNARGUES IN MOSCOW. HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT IT WAS A NON-STARTER FROM GISCARD'S POINT OF VIEW. IN ANY CASE, SOURCE SAID SAUVAGNARGUES TRIP PRODUCED NO PROGRESS ON QUESTION OF SENIOR VISITS.

7. SOURCE ALSO SAID THAT IMPRESSION PERSISTED AMONG SOVIETS HERE THAT CHERVONENKO WOULD BE REPLACED SOME TIME THIS FALL OR WINTER, ALTHOUGH CHERVONENKO HIMSELF IS MAKING FALL APPOINTMENTS AS IF HIS FUTURE HERE WERE ASSURED. ONE CONSIDERATION WAS THAT MOSCOW MIGHT WANT TO POSITION ITSELF BETTER BETWEEN PRESENT MAJORITY AND FRENCH LEFT, IF LATTER'S PROSPECTS SHOULD CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. MOREOVER, CHERVONERKO HAD MADE MISTAKES. HOWEVER, WHEN ASKED IF POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS WERE ALREADY IN THE FIELD, SOURCE SAID THAT "UNFORTUNATELY" ABRASSIMOV WAS MAKING SERIOUS PITCH FOR RETURN TO PARIS. AS OF NOW, IN SOURCE'S OPINION, HE HAD BEST CHANCE BECAUSE OF
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HIS EXCELLENT CONTACTS, AND BECAUSE "BREZHNEV PERSONALLY WAS A MILD MAN." SOURCE MADE NO EFFORT TO CONCEAL THAT ABRASSIMOV CHOICE WOULD NOT, IN HIS VIEW, SERVE SOVIET OBJECTIVES IN FRANCE SINCE HE HAS HAD WELL-KNOWN CONFLICTS WITH MITTERRAND. HOWEVER, HE POINTED OUT "PERSONAL RELATIONS OFTEN WIN OUT OVER STATE INTEREST."
COMMENT: WE WILL SEE.
GAMMON

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